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ABSTRACT

A study examined the management style of non-Fortune 500 business leaders and its relationship to their organizations' environment in order to provide a profile of a cross-section of these leaders. The presidents or CEOs of 65 randomly selected Indiana companies with annual sales of at least $5 million were surveyed about situational leadership using Hershey and Blanchard's Leadership Effectiveness and Adaptability Description (LEAD). Subjects were also questioned about the relative importance of 10 defining characteristics for determining leadership style. The LEAD measure is based on the premise that different leadership approaches are needed for different types of situations. In determining an individual's particular approach to a leadership situation, the traditional divisions of task-oriented and relationship-oriented behaviors are used, but focus is on the subordinate's ability and willingness to do a particular activity. Results of the survey indicated that managers favored a style that is high task and high relationship while almost entirely neglecting the process of delegating as defined by the LEAD test. Findings suggest that, based on the manager's perception of the organization's environment, there should be a great deal more participation and delegating, since the managers' perceptions indicate a manager-as-developer style. (Three tables of data, eight figures, and 17 footnotes are appended.) (NKA)

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LEADING AND MANAGING: A STUDY OF STYLE AND PERCEPTION

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ABSTRACT

LEADING AND MANAGING: A STUDY OF

STYLE AND PERCEPTION

This paper reports the results of a survey of business leaders regarding their management style and its relationship to the organization's environment. A situational leadership test and a ten-factor environment test were administed and the results are compared. Conclusions are drawn concerning the correctness of current criticism of management practices and the responses provided by this group of leaders.

LEADING AND MANAGING: A STUDY OF

STYLE AND PERCEPTION

The study of leadership behavior has been a focus of numerous management studies. Recent examinations of managerial practices in American organizations have tended to be critical of many of the leadship techniques. Pascale and Anthos conclude:

> Our managerial set is being challenged persistently on three fronts. First, we are being challenged on the frontier of management practice, where even bigger doses of what we already do will yield diminishing returns. Something more is needed to get our organizations to run effectively. Second, we are challenged by shifting values within our society which leads people to expect different things from organizations and to seek different meaning from work itself. And, third, the competition is killing us.[1]

In partial response to this type of criticism, Peters and Waterman, in the study In Search of Excellence, examined forty-nine highly successful companies in the U.S. In addition to the various characteristics of of the excellent companies, they "found associated with almost every (one) a strong leader (or two) who seemed to have a lot to do with making the company excellent in the first place."[2] When trying to identify the particular attributes of these leaders, however, they tended to concentrate on "transformational leadership" where the leader and followers are brought to a higher level of motivation and morality.[3]

Peters and Waterman admit a strong initial bias toward not finding leaders as a key factor in the successful companies, but they revised their opinion after examining the specific organizations and leader behaviors. Peters and Austin, in A Passion for Excellence: The Leadership Difference, provide a further sophistication of the concept of transformational leadership by indicating the excellent leader goes beyond the mundane, day-to-day problems of managing an organization by creating a new level of awareness. They focus on people-oriented leadership as the key variable for success and highlight M.B.W.A. or "Management by Wandering Around" combined with concern for people, care of customers, and constant innovation.[4] Wandering is not intended as a policing technique, but is designed to allow the employee greater access to management and management increased knowledge of the organization.

Although rich in anecdotial material, Peters and Austin still leave an understanding of what the successful manager actually does somewhat up in the air. Kotter, in The General Managers, focused on general managers from a variety of companies with a wide range of financial and personnel responsibilities.[5] After a five-year study involving hundreds of general managers, he conluded:

> These effective executives did not approach their jobs by planning, organizing, motivating, and controlling in a very formal sense. Instead, they relied on more continuous, more informal, and more subtle methods to cope with their large and complex job demands. The most important products of their approach were agendas and networks, not formal plans and organizational charts. . . . They typically spent the vast majority of their time with other people, discussing a wide variety of topics. . . . (They) asked numerous questions, yet they

> rarely could be seen making big decisions. These conversations often included a considerable amount of joking and non-work-related issues. . . . The general managers rarely gave orders, but often tried to influence others."[6]

Kotter's observations are consistent with those of numerous other studies and reflect Pascale and Anthos' call for the American manager to focus more on the four soft S's--Staff, Skills, Style, and Superordinate goals--instead of the three hard S's of Strategy, Structure, and Systems.[7]

In a very useful manner, Bradford and Cohen, in Managing for Excellence, attempt to pull together all the issues ranging from the indictments leveled by Pascale and Anthos to the successful behaviors discussed, and provide a model of the manager-as-developer.[8] Later in this study the particular attributes of this model will be discussed, but generally this type of leader is most interested in the growth of individuals and teams within the organization which is essentially the transformational concept. Bradford and Cohen attempt to be very specific in their recommendations for becoming a developmental manager.

Regardless of the examination of current leadership, conclusions are being drawn about how managers presently behave which include severe indictments and strong support for people-oriented, developmental practices. None of these authors call for laizze-faire or "country-club" approaches since the successful leader is literally "on-top" of what is occuring in the organization.

However, it is still somewhat unclear if the average business leader does exhibit these traditional behaviors. This study sought to determine the profile of non-Fortune 500 leaders. Do the leaders still use old managerial practices? Is there a gap between the manager's perception of their environ-

ment and the style of leadership they are likely to use? What would a cross-section of leaders tend to use as a leadership style and how would they see their organizational setting?

This study was an attempt to answer these issues by identifying a testable sample, using a situational leadership question format, and allowing the leaders to identify their perception of their employees based on Bradford and Cohen's classifications. 2,166 companies were identified in Indiana with gross annual sales of at least $5 million. These companies were located through standard business reference sources or through direct contact for verification. 152 companies could not be further identified since they apparently had out-of-state affiliation.

The remaining 2,014 companies were listed by their primary business activity using the Standard Industrial Classification Codes (SIC) and then listed in alphabetical order within the classifications. Ten percent of the companies (201) were randomly selected and the presidents or CEO identified. This group provided the sample for the survey.

In addition to requesting demographic information, the survey form included a version of the Leadership Effectiveness and Adaptability Description (LEAD) developed by Hershey and Blanchard.[9] This particular test was chosen because it focused on situational leadership through the managers' self-perception of their organizations, allowed the additional calculation of style adaptability, and was relatively quick to complete for the manager. Finally, the ten defining characteristics for determining leadership style forwarded by Bradford and Cohen were provided with the request that the manager decide the relative importance of each item. These will be further explained with the discussion of the results.

The survey form was pretested with two managerial groups totaling

41 people. Neither the banking management seminar (23 people) nor the manufacturing supervision session (18 people) experienced difficulty in using the form and they also confirmed the estimated amount of time of fifteen minutes for completing the form.

RESULTS

Of the 201 surveys distributed, 83 survey forms were returned (41% response rate). For various reasons, 18 of these returns did not provide sufficient information to be included in the final results. The remaining 65 fully completed forms provide the information for the reported results. The types of businesses represent a broad cross-section of the SIC categories as shown in Table 1. The percentages of the total responses is roughly equivalent to the origional breakdown of the 2,166 Indiana businesses. None of the 18 returns which could not be used were from public utilities, so no conclusions can be made regarding the lack of representation for this category.

The average number of individuals employed by the organizations is 386.9. Table 2 indicates the broad range of sizes represented in the sample. Table 3 shows the ages of the respondents which ranged from 28 to 64 with and average age of 49.8. They have been managing for an average of 20.8 years with a range between 3 and 40 years (Table 3).

LEADERSHIP STYLE

Hershey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory (LEAD) is based on the premise that different leadership approaches are needed for different types of situations. They define leadership as "the process of influencing the activities of an individual or group in efforts toward goal achievement in a given situation."[10] In determining an individual's particular approach to a leadership situation, they use the traditional divisions of task-oriented and

relationship-oriented behaviors but they focus on the subordinate's ability and willingness to do a particular activity. This "task maturity" is recognized by Hershey and Blanchard as a "catch-all" for several variables which the leader must be able to personally take into account given the particular employee or task. The interrelationship between the variables and the needed leadership behavior is broadly outlined in Figure 1. Since their test was designed to deal with "any situation where someone is trying to influence the behavior of another individual or group,"[11] and is not oriented toward any particular type of organization, the test provided a useful unifying test of the leaders and managers in this survey.

The respondents basic leadership behavior styles are shown in Figure 2 . As a cross reference with Figure 1 will indicate, the major style choice for all twelve situations was high task and high relationship with falls in situation 2. Selling is the likely choice of the leaders in 46% of the cases. At the opposite end of the results, only 6% chose situation four of low relationship and low task which would be the delegating posture for the manager. Participating, as represented by high relationship and low task oriented behaviors, was chosen in 26% of the cases. Situation 1, high task and low relationship, or telling, was selected in 22% of the cases. The general profile of the managers would be that in twelve situations involving subordinates where they can make four possible leadership choices, they are most likely to rely on selling. At this point, one would be hard pressed to draw any particular conclusions beyond the fact that the managers do not seem to be comfortable with backing out of the decision making process through delegation, and they are most likely to be involved in the goal setting of the individual or group while providing high levels of socioemotional support through selling. They are closely divided on a second, or back-up choice, between participating

which is usually seen as having a high implicit trust in people, and telling where the leader has well defined methods which the subordinates should follow.[12]

Additional information about the managers is provided by the test results since each of the twelve situations also provides choices, which, given the situation, have a variation in their likelyhood for success. By weighing the leadership behavior with the highest probablity of success in the given situation with a +2, the behavior with the least likelyhood of success with a -2, the second best alternative with a +1 and the third with a -1, the management style adaptability profile for a manager can be established.[13] If the managers consistently were to chose the least likely alternative to succeed, which would be a suprise given the demographics of this survey, the score would be -24. The perfect manager, who also somehow eluded the sample, would be +24.

As shown on Figure 3 , the actual range was from -5 to +20 with the preponderance of scores falling between +1 and +7. Interestingly, only three managers scored in the minus area. Hershey and Blanchard report:

> Based on a sample of over twenty thousand middle managers from many different kinds of organizations from some fourteen cultures, we found that the effectiveness scores of these subjects (over 83 percent), who have responded to the LEAD-Self prior to reading or participating in Situational Leadership training, fall between -6 and +6.[14]

This test of style adapability reflects the manager's own willingness to look at each situation and make choices rather than adopting a telling, selling, participating, or delegating posture in most cases. As can be seen in Figure 3 , the managers participating in the survey, with the possible

exception of those scoring in the upper teens, could benefit from a greater understanding of style adaptability.

MANAGER'S PERCEPTION

Managing for Excellence, by Bradford and Cohen, outlines three possible management styles that are likely to be used. They are not concerned with the actual situational correctness as much as they are concerned with the managers' view of their jobs in relationship to their subordinates and the pursuit of excellence. There exists, they argue, a basic difference between the type of management traditionally practiced and the type needed for organizational development and perhaps survival. Basing their views on a careful review of the materials available about management, they see three types of managerial activity. The traditional management approach has been toward a heroic response to subordinates and the workplace. Whenever problems occur, the manager is essentially the one who will provide the answers or manage the coordination needed between individuals or units. This heroic management style works, but it does not encourage excellence or development. Instead, it tends to cause a great deal of reliance on the manager who is acting out a self-concept of being tough, reliable, and able to handle situations. The manager becomes a cross between John Wayne and the Lone Ranger by using behaviors which centralize the manager's importance and thereby diminish the growth of subordinates. As Figure 4 indicates, the process creates a self-fulfilling prophecy regarding employee dependence and a lack of development. Bradford and Cohen are not necessarily suggesting these two types of management--manager-as-technician and manager-as-conductor--cannot succeed. As the person promoted from within, the manager-as-technician has all the answers and will take-over any situation. This individual's pleasure at work comes from doing and solving problems related to specific tasks.

The manager-as-conductor is very good at making sure different individuals or units work well together since this type of manager is very oriented toward setting goals and preventing conflicts.

> In organizations (or situations within units) characterized by complex tasks, highly interdependent subordinates' work, a constantly changing environment, and competent subordiates, both the Technician and Conductor models are likely to prevent excellence, even though each may produce adequate performance. Since both styles emphasize the manager having the answers and being in control, they overuse the task abilities of the leader, and underutilize the competencies of subordinates. Heroic overconcentration of responsibility reduces the organization's chances to tap subordiates talent fully.[15]

Bradford and Cohen argue for a third style called manager-as-developer which is postheroic. This is the style used in the excellent companies, the transformational leadership, and should be followed by managers trying to achieve excellence.

They provide ten characteristics to guide the manager in determining the style demanded by the environment in which they are managing. The ten characteristics are: I. subordinates work independently; II. subordinates do simple tasks; III. environment is stable; IV. subordinates have low technical knowledge compared to boss; V. subordinate commitment not needed for success; VI. subordinates do complex tasks; VII. subordiates require considerable coordination; VIII. environment is changing; IX. subordinates have high technical knowledge; and X. subordinate commitment necessary for excellence.[16] How these characteristics divide into style demands is indicated in Figures 5, 6, and 7.

Each manager was provided the choice of: 0=does not describe my organi-

zation; 1=true is selected instances; 2=true in majority of instances; and 3=represents an accurate description. By compiling the totals, the profiles of the organization's environment can be plotted and the required managerial style needed can be shown.

Figure 5 summarizes the responses for the manager-as-technician profile. Two of the factors which justify a Technician response, subordinates work independdently and environment is stable, are ranked high by the managers. However, the predominate indication would be for a relative lack of a need for this approach. Figure 6 shows the managers' responses and how they can be gauged based on the criteria for the manager-as-conductor. Although there is some justification for the conductor approach, as shown under the categories of environment is stable, subordinates do complex tasks, and subordinates require considerable coordiation, the response profile does not provide a strong justification for the Conductor approach either.

The characteristics of the environment which call for a manager-as-developer approach, however, are clearly the prevailing environmental characteristics chosen by the managers as shown in Figure 7. In each of the five categories, the 1, 2, or 3 responses greatly outweigh the 0 or does not describe my organization response. To the degree Bradford and Cohen are correct in assessing the characteristics which call for the Developer approach, this group of managers clearly identify the Developer as the best managerial choice as summarized in Figure 8. Since the managers were asked to guage their responses to each of the ten environmental characteristics, Figure 8 would indicate that the managers see the developmental approach as the one required for their organization.

DISCUSSION

The goal of this survey was to provide a profile of a cross-section of

organizational leaders. Based on the first test of Situational Leadership, the managers surveyed were likely to adopt a "selling" approach which, according to Hershey and Blanchard, was marginally effective based on the twelve situations. The managers' perceptions of their environment, as reflected in the second half of the survey, would indicate a need for a manager-as-developer, or postheroic, profile. As such, the managers should be predominately in quadrant 3 or even 4 of the situational leadership test since the concepts of participation and delegation are components of the Developer approach. If Bradford and Cohen's theory is correct, the managers already see the necessary maturity based on their responses to the ten environmental characteristics to justify a shift of their individual management styles to situation 3 or 4 of the Situational Leadership model.

Why, then, have these managers not already chosen to move to a more effective managerial style? The answer lies in the opening comments regarding the need to examine management style in light of the changing environment. In the past, the manager received a great deal of personal reinforcement from doing what had always worked well. But, more and more of the same responses will not create excellence.

For example, it is almost a truism that employee participation is needed for excellence. When it is done well, the evidence is overwhelming that participation leads to outstanding results. But the use of a heroic management style will inevitably limit the participation since the leader will remain the controlling and pivotal factor in the attempt.

Situational Leadership is a concept which seems fit well into the needs of the modern workplace. Yet, the managers in this survey do not seem to be likely to adapt their style and, more importantly, do not seem to be aware of the relationship between their behaviors and impact of the environment.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

Since the managers in this survey were the leaders of their respective organizations, it would be useful to also examine the behaviors of the other managers in each company. It may the selected leaders of the companies provide an atypical sample although the demographics would not tend to support that conclusion. Some of the responding managers asked for copies of the summary information and their organizations would provide an excellent follow-up study of leadership patterns in a particular organization. Such research in presently being conducted.

Second, although the Bradford and Cohen work is of great value in connecting the various studies of excellence, apparently there is no research to show the ten categories used in this survey are actually tied specifically to the three managerial behavior's potential success. A useful analysis would be to tie the lack of excellence in specific examples with the use of the Technician or Conductor styles. Much evidence exists to support the importance of the Developer style, but it would be helpful to be able to support the categories more specifically. Bradford and Cohen probably did not intend for the ten categories to be accepted as truisms, but based on this survey, the categories do an excellent job of dividing managerial perceptions.

CONCLUSION

This prelimiary examination of non-Fortune 500 leaders and how they manage provides a useful cross-section of style and perception. The managers favor a style which is high task and high relationship while almost entirely neglecting the process of delegating as defined by the LEAD test. Based on the manager's perception of their organization's environment, there should be

a great deal more participation and delegating since the managers' perception seem to call for a manager-as-developer style.

This survey provides useful support for the opening observations regarding the need for managers to reexamine how they approach their various activities. If transformational leadership is needed in the effort to increase productivity and move toward excellence, some examination of managerial style would be in order. Bolman and Deal, in their efforts to explain this pursuit of development, categorize the successful manager.

> They are leading managers, managerial leaders, something more in any event than custodians of the status quo. They are able to see things differently--to have visions of new strategies or patterns in everyday thought and deed. . . . These are the kind of people that will lead (or manager) the organizations of tomorrow.[17]

These managerial leaders obviously are not the only factors in organizational success or failure. The willingness of many managers to be willing to alter behaviors when provided a strong rationale would point to this aspect of organizational life as a very important stepping stone toward pursuing excellence.

ENDNOTES

[1]Richard T. Pascale and Anthony G. Anthos, The Art of Japanese Management: Applications for American Executives (New York: Warner Books, 1981), p. 25.

[2]Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman, In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), p. 26.

[3]Peters and Waterman, p. 26.

[4]Tom Peters and Nancy Austin, A Passion for Excellence: The Leadership Difference (New York: Random House, 1985), p. 5, ff.

[5]John P. Kotter, The General Managers (New York: The Free Press, 1982).

[6]Kotter, p. 127.

[7]Pascale and Anthos, p. 127.

[8]David L. Bradford and Allan R. Cohen, Managing for Excellence: The Guide to Developing High Performance in Contemporary Organizations (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1984).

[9]Paul Hersey and Kenneth H. Blanchard, Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources, 3rd ed (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1977), pp. 85-131.

[10]Hersey and Blanchard, p. 84.

[11]Hersey and Blanchard, p. 105.

[12]Hersey and Blanchard, pp. 107, 226-234.

[13]In addition to the research cited by Hersey and Blanchard, two studies support the situational leadership theory's (LEAD) accuracy. They are: Robert K. Hambleton and Robert Gumpert, "The Validity of Hersey and Blanchard's Theory of Leader Effectiveness," Group and Organizational Studies, 7(1982), pp. 225-42; and Paul Hersey, Anthony L. Angelini, and Steve Carakushansky, "The Impact of Situational Leadership and Classroom Structure on Learning Effectiveness," Group and Organizational Studies, 7(1982), pp. 216-224.

[14]Hersey and Blanchard, P. 231.

[15]Bradford and Cohen, P. 55.

[16]Bradford and Cohen, P. 56.

[17]Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, Modern Approaches to Understanding and Managing Organizations (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1985). p. 294.

TABLE 1

TYPE OF BUSINESS ACTIVITY FOR RESPONDING ORGANIZATIONS*

	Number	Percent of Total
Manufacturing	21	32.3%
Services	19	29.2%
Retail Trade	16	24.6%
Construction	6	9.2%
Agriculture	5	7.7%
Banking	5	7.7%
Insurance	5	7.7%
Durables(wholesale trade)	4	6.2%
Real Estate	3	4.6%
Communications	2	3.1%
Finance	2	3.1%
Food	2	3.1%
Mining	2	3.1%
Non-durables(wholesale trade)	2	3.1%
Public Utilities	0	0

*13 managers indicated several primary business activities.

TABLE 2

TOTAL EMPLOYMENT OF ORGANIZATIONS

(Individuals employed)
(Average 386.9)

16 - 1	150 - 4
18 - 1	180 - 1
19 - 1	225 - 1
26 - 1	250 - 2
33 - 1	275 - 1
35 - 2	310 - 1
40 - 2	350 - 1
43 - 1	400 - 2
50 - 1	450 - 2
52 - 1	500 - 1
55 - 1	550 - 1
60 - 1	800 - 3
90 - 1	2100 - 1
96 - 1	2600 - 1
105 - 1	3000 - 1

TABLE 3

PROFILE OF MANAGERS

AGE-NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS		YEARS AS MANAGER-NUMBER*	
28 - 1	(Average: 49.8 yrs)	(Average: 20.8)	3 - 2
30 - 1			5 - 2
32 - 1			6 - 1
34 - 1			8 - 1
35 - 1			10 - 5
36 - 1			11 - 1
37 - 4			12 - 2
39 - 1			13 - 1
41 - 2			15 - 4
42 - 3			16 - 1
43 - 3			18 - 3
44 - 2			20 - 8
45 - 2			21 - 3
46 - 3			23 - 4
47 - 2			24 - 1
48 - 4			25 - 6
49 - 2			26 - 2
50 - 1			28 - 1
51 - 1			29 - 2
52 - 2			30 - 5
53 - 2			31 - 1
54 - 1			34 - 2
55 - 3			35 - 1
56 - 2			37 - 1
57 - 3			40 - 2
58 - 1			
59 - 2		*3 no responses	
60 - 4			
61 - 2			
62 - 1			
63 - 2			
64 - 1			

FIGURE 1

LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR - APPROPRIATENESS

RELATIONSHIP ORIENTED BEHAVIOR, CONSIDERATE, INTERPERSONAL

HIGH

LOW

SITUATION 3 PARTICIPATING High relationship & low task MODERATELY HIGH ON TASK MATURITY, NOT FULLY WILLING Subordinate needs support, indications of rewards for achievement--no direct behavior by superior, because subordinate knows how to do the job.	SITUATION 2 SELLING High task & high relationship LOW TASK MATURITY, BUT WILLING AND ABLE TO DO TASK Leader is both task-directive & openly considerate & relationship oriented. Leader provides direction & keeps subordinate's willingness to do new challenge high.
SITUATION 4 DELEGATING Low task & low relationship HIGH TASK MATURITY Subordinate needs almost no direction and little support. Leader uses interpersonal relationship behaviors for quality of superior-subordinate relationship.	SITUATION 1 TELLING High task & low relationship LOW TASK MATURITY Subordinate needs clear & specific instructions to learn to do job. Leader's willingness to take time & effort acts as evidence of concern--not impersonal but task oriented.

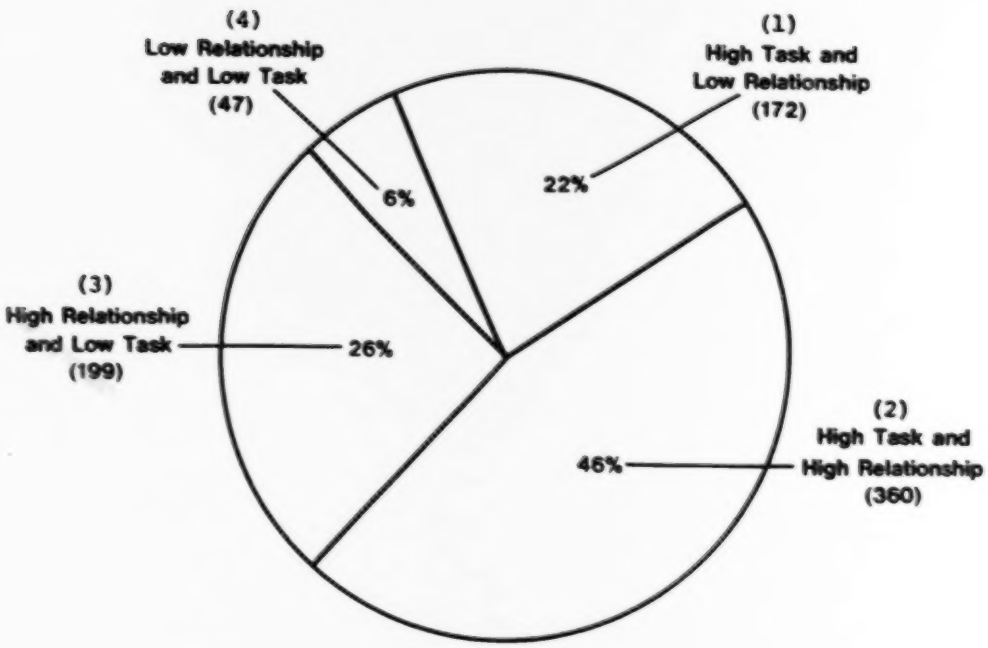
LOW HIGH

TASK-ORIENTED BEHAVIOR, DIRECTIVE, INIATING

The Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership Grid

FIGURE 2

BASIC LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR STYLES



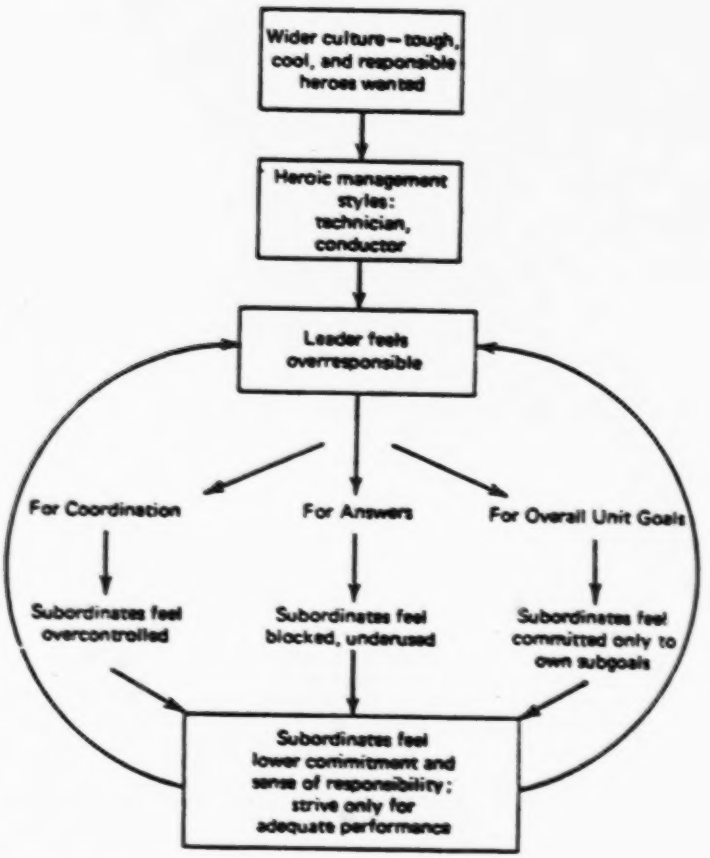
Total Responses 778

FIGURE 3

MANAGEMENT STYLE ADAPTABILITY

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8	+9	+10	+11	+12	+13	+14	+15	+16	+17	+18	+19	+20
(1)			(2)			(3)	(3)	(4)	(3)	(7)	(7)	(4)	(3)	(4)	(2)	(4)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(3)	(2)	(2)	(1)		(1)

FIGURE 4


Wider culture—tough, cool, and responsible heroes wanted
Heroic management styles: technician, conductor
Leader feels overresponsible
For Coordination
For Answers
For Overall Unit Goals
Subordinates feel overcontrolled
Subordinates feel blocked, underused
Subordinates feel committed only to own subgoals
Subordinates feel lower commitment and sense of responsibility; strive only for adequate performance

From: Bradford and Cohen, p. 57.

FIGURE 5

MANAGER-AS-TECHNICIAN

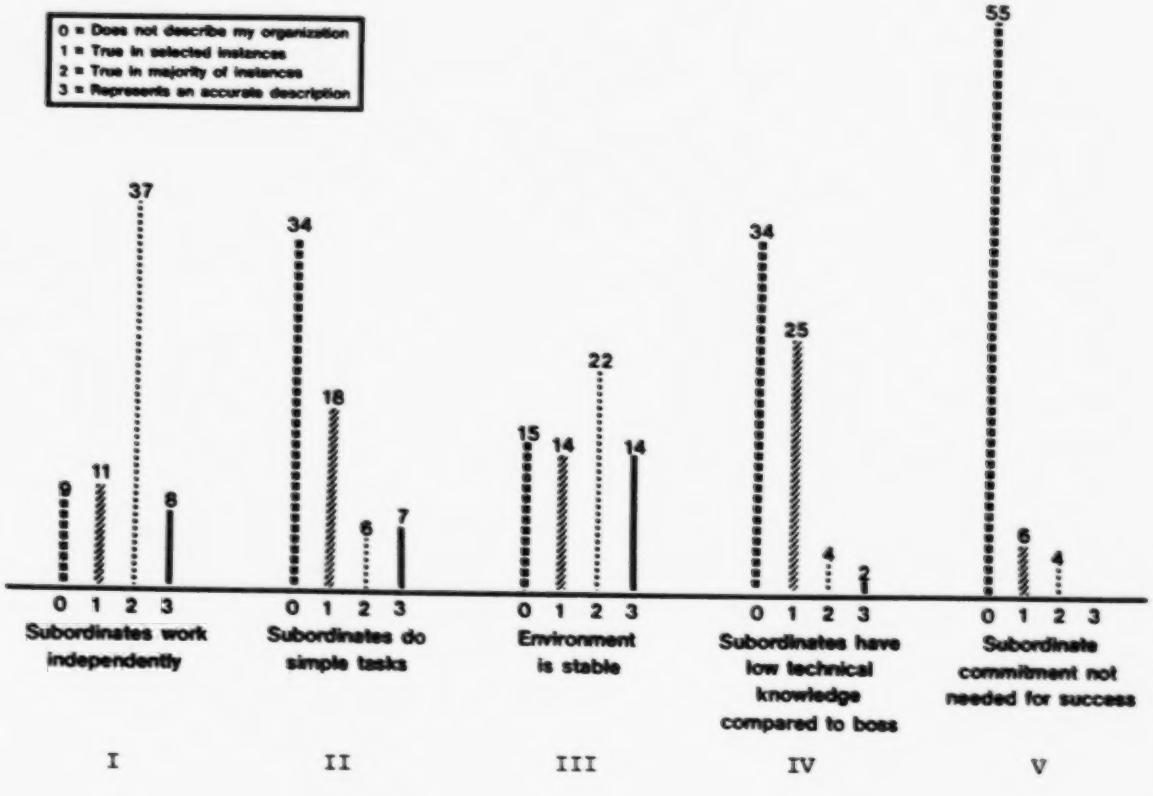


FIGURE 6

MANAGER-AS-CONDUCTOR

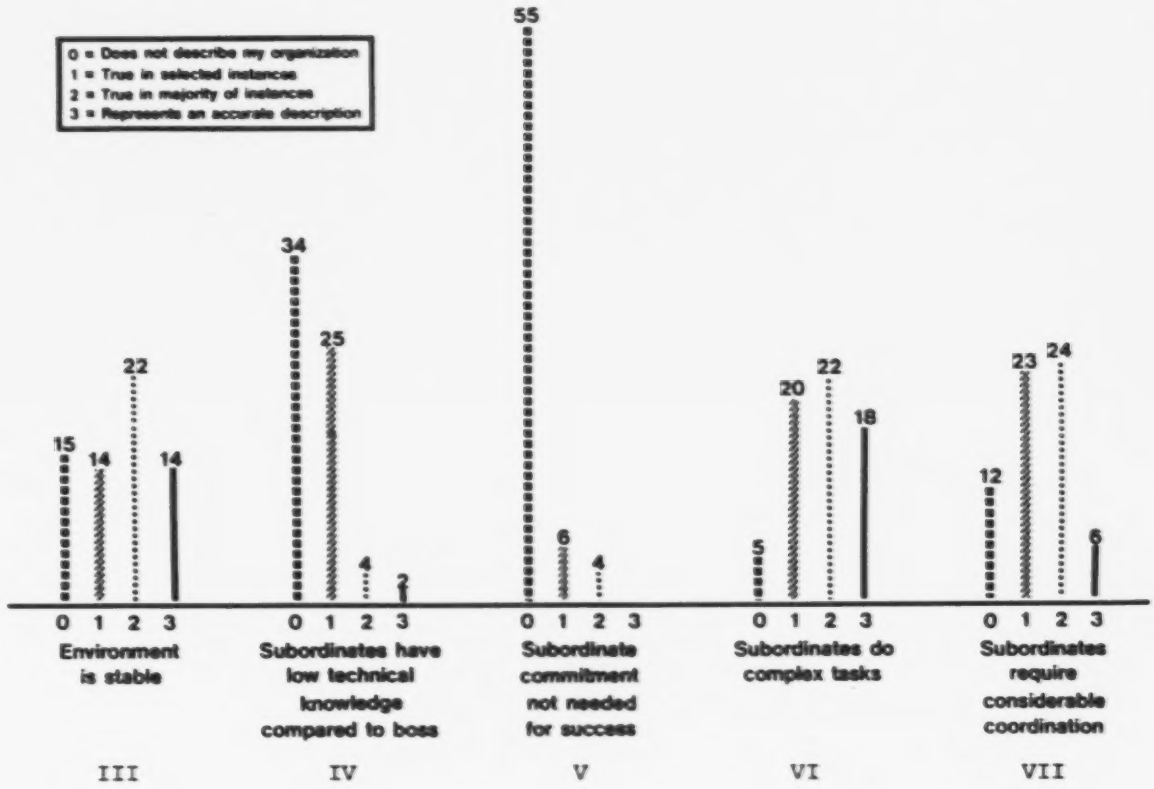


FIGURE 7

MANAGER-AS-DEVELOPER

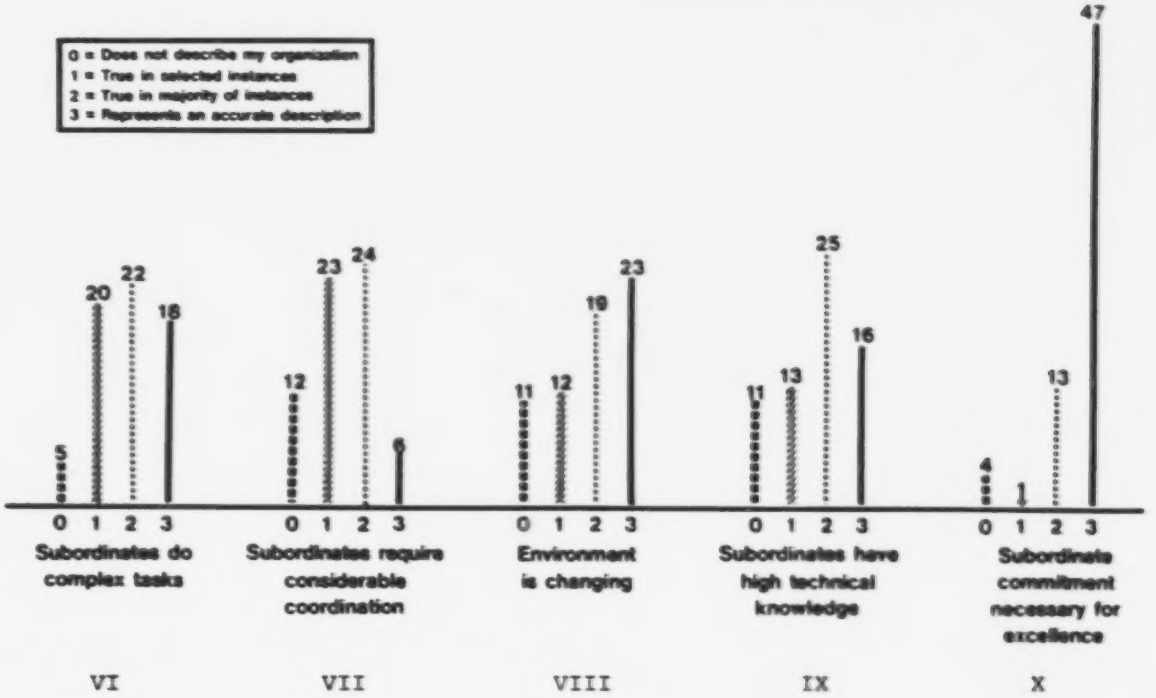


FIGURE 8

SUM OF RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ABOUT ORGANIZATION'S ENVIRONMENT